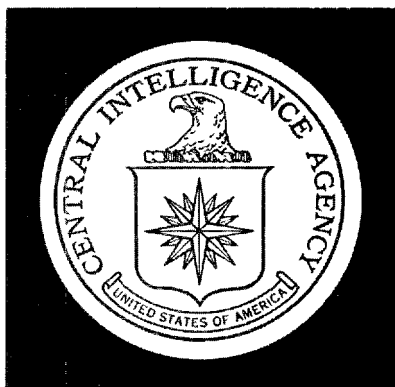


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INTELLIGENCE

MEMORANDUM

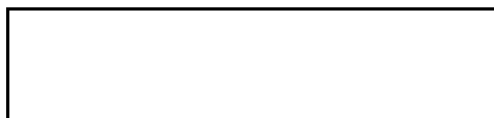
The Situation in Vietnam

State Department review completed

NSA review completed

ARMY review(s) completed.

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Top Secret

6 December 1966

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6 December 1966
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HIGHLIGHTS

Constituent Assembly delegates appear to be evenly divided on the issue of a presidential system as they prepare to vote on the principles of the constitutional form of the future South Vietnamese Government.

Allied forces in South Vietnam made only light contact with the Viet Cong.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:

Twenty-two Communist soldiers have been reported killed by US Marines in Quang Nam Province (Paras. 1-2). A CIDG force discovered a Viet Cong bivouac and training area near Tay Ninh city and seized 30,000 Communist uniforms (Para. 3).

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their units were subordinate to the Viet Cong 165A Regiment (Paras. 4-5). During a short period in early December 2,500 refugees fled VC-controlled areas in Kien Giang Province (Paras. 6-8).

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II. Political Developments in South Vietnam:

Constituent Assembly delegates, scheduled to vote on the principles of the future government on 7 December, appear evenly divided between those favoring a straight presidential system and those preferring a presidential - prime ministerial system (Para. 1). A plan to reorganize village and hamlet administrations is awaiting Premier Ky's approval (Para. 2). Friction among political party leaders in I Corps could develop into trouble for important government programs in the area (Paras. 3-5).

III. Military Developments in North Vietnam: North Vietnamese MIG-21s have increased their use of air-to-air missiles since 2 December (Paras. 1-3).

IV. Other Communist Military Developments: The Chinese are rotating their AAA units in Vietnam (Paras. 1-4).

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V. Communist Political Developments: [redacted]
[redacted] Peking's assistance to Vietnam will be doubled (Paras. 1-2).

25X1

6 December 1966



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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Elements of the one-battalion US Marine Operation MISSISSIPPI, a search-and-destroy operation being conducted in Quang Nam Province, reported killing eight Communist soldiers and capturing 19 others. American casualties were three killed and 17 wounded. Fifty-five tons of rice have been seized in this operation since 28 November.

2. Patrols in the Da Nang area reported killing an additional 14 Viet Cong. No US Marine casualties were reported.

3. A three-company South Vietnamese Civilian Irregular Defense Corps (CIDG) force, following up a US B-52 strike, seized 30,000 Communist uniforms at an enemy bivouac and training area 20 miles northwest of Tay Ninh city in Tay Ninh Province early on 6 December. The captured clothing included both khaki uniforms and the black pajama-like garb worn by Viet Cong guerrillas. The CIDG force will bring out 2,000 of the uniforms and destroy the remainder.

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Tan Son Nhut Attackers

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a portion of the attack was conducted by two Viet Cong platoons subordinate to the 165A Viet Cong Regiment which has been operating in the Saigon area.

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5. The terrorists left their base camps southwest of Saigon on 2 and 3 December and, after assembling near the western edge of the city, departed for the airfield late on 3 December. Some of the Viet Cong penetrated the base perimeter through a drainage ditch at a construction site northwest of the main runway.

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6 December 1966

I-1

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Refugees Flee VC Areas in Kien Giang Province

6. During the short period of 2-5 December, 2,500 refugees are reported to have fled from a Viet Cong base area located in the Hon Chong Mountain area, 35 miles northwest of the province capital from Rach Gia in Kien Giang Province. The refugees, according to a MACV report, left the base area as a result of the combined pressures of air strikes and an intensive allied psychological warfare campaign. The refugee group includes about 1,200 children.

7. Although the refugees expressed dissatisfaction with Viet Cong control techniques, they are anxious to return home to begin their rice harvest. An exodus of this magnitude demonstrates that VC control of the population can be effectively challenged by a carefully prepared and executed psywar campaign. A follow-up psychological operation is being planned to exploit fully this situation.

8. In addition to the refugees, 64 Viet Cong defectors came under government control. Included in the defector group were one noncommissioned officer, a tax collector, and several cadre.

6 December 1966

I-2

II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. The Constituent Assembly postponed its session of 6 December until the 7th in order to give its delegates one more day to consider their positions on the form of the constitutional government. The US Embassy has reported that the delegates appear evenly divided between those favoring a straight presidential system and those preferring a combined presidential - prime ministerial system. Some delegates have implied that government pressure is being exerted for the latter system. Those critical of the government interpret this pressure as an ill-disguised attempt to provide a means to perpetuate the Thieu-Ky partnership.

Village and Hamlet Elections

2. A plan to reorganize village and hamlet administrations is awaiting Premier Ky's approval. The plan will promote self-government by reinstituting elected village councils of six to 12 members, depending upon the size of a village's population. The councils will have power over the village budget, taxes, land transfers, public services, and internal legal matters. Each council will have a three-year term and will choose a village chief--who will be a salaried administrative official--from among its membership. At the hamlet level, there will be an elected hamlet chief, plus a deputy if the size of the hamlet population warrants one. The elections are not yet scheduled, but are expected sometime during the spring of 1967 for approximately 800 villages and 4,000-5,000 hamlets where security conditions are satisfactory.

Nationalist Party Squabbles in I Corps

3. Friction between the Dai Viet and VNQDD parties in Quang Tri and Thua Thien provinces is a current subject of major interest among knowledgeable Vietnamese in I Corps. In general, Dai Viet supporters predominate in the two northern provinces of Quang Tri and Thua Thien, while VNQDD members are stronger in the other three I Corps provinces

6 December 1966

II-1

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of Quang Nam, Quang Tin, and Quang Ngai. The focal point of the friction appears to be in Thua Thien, where six VNQDD-oriented district chiefs have complained to the I Corps commander of alleged discrimination by Dai Viet members among police and Revolutionary Development groups. Other, somewhat unrelated friction among VNQDD factions has also been reported in Quang Ngai and Quang Nam provinces.

4. The interparty squabbling has involved considerable speculation about the political orientation of major government officials in I Corps, especially I Corps commander General Lam. General Lam himself claims that he favors neither party,

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Generally, however, Lam is forced to deal with both parties depending upon their local strength in each province. General Lam has stated that his major concern is to keep party differences within reasonable limits, and to avoid a serious shooting incident which would almost certainly involve US/GVN cadre teams.

5. Thus far, Dai Viet - VNQDD differences have taken the form of extensive maneuvering by party leaders for control of local government functions and various government programs reaching into the countryside. These leaders appear to realize that an outbreak of violence would only be costly for all involved. Nevertheless, an assassination or other violent incident remains a possibility which could touch off a major conflict between the parties, with serious effects on Revolutionary Development and other government programs in the area.

6 December 1966

II-2

25X1

III. MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTH VIETNAM

1. North Vietnamese MIGs have fired more air-to-air missiles (AAMs) in combat since 2 December than in any previous period in the war. So far none of the missiles is known to have succeeded in downing a US aircraft. The increased rate of missile firing suggests, however, that the DRV Air Force may now be prepared to oppose US strikes with AAMs on a regular basis.

2. US pilots reported sighting air-to-air missiles on Communist aircraft over North Vietnam as early as April 1966. It was not clear at that time, however, whether the weapons sighted were AAMs or unguided air-to-air rockets. Four pilot sightings in July added to the evidence that the DRV possessed some type of air-to-air missile and photography of Phuc Yen Airfield [redacted] confirmed the use of AAMs on MIG-21 aircraft. Since that time, additional pilot reports and communications intercepts have suggested that the DRV Air Force has been supplied with both the AA-1 ALKALI beam-rider and the AA-2 ATOLL heat-seeking missile systems.

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3. Microphone characteristics and pilot sightings of the air engagements of 2, 4, and 5 December combine to show that AAMs launched at US aircraft were fired by DRV pilots flying MIG-21s. This advanced Soviet-built fighter can fire either AA-1 or AA-2 missiles.

6 December 1966

III-1

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IV. OTHER COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

1. Chinese Communist antiaircraft artillery (AAA) units have apparently been rotated again in northern North Vietnam. Around 24 October, an element [] of the army 65th AAA Division replaced the AAA division [] in the Yen Bai area of northwest North Vietnam, and on 1 December the air force 101st AAA Division moved into the Lang Son area of the northeast DRV apparently to replace the air force 103rd AAA Division.

2. This activity follows a pattern set in February 1966 when the 103rd replaced an unidentified army AAA division [] at Lang Son, and [] replaced a suspect army AAA division [] at Yen Bai.

3. Of the six Chinese AAA units that have rotated in and out of North Vietnam, only three--the CCAF 103rd and 101st AAA Divisions and the element of the 65th AAA Division--have been firmly identified. The other three units apparently represent composite AAA organizations or units that were not known to exist prior to their arrival in North Vietnam.

4. Since early 1966, seven to ten different types of communications facilities have been identified serving Chinese tactical AAA operations in North Vietnam. Most of these facilities are active in the northwest DRV, and are apparently concentrated in the Yen Bai area. The others are apparently operating in the general Hanoi-Haiphong-Kep area of the northeast DRV. Recent intercepts from these facilities indicate that AAA visual observation posts may be more specifically located at Kep Thai Nguyen, and Haiphong. This suggests that the Chinese AAA division operating in the northeast DRV has a much more extensive area of responsibility--from Lang Son to Hanoi to Haiphong--than the unit in the northwest whose primary mission apparently is to defend the Chinese airfield construction project at Yen Bai.

6 December 1966

IV-1

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V. COMMUNIST POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. Peking is planning to increase its logistics support to North Vietnam,

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China had already decided to double the amount of its aid to Vietnam next year. In addition to food and war materials, Peking will dispatch personnel to assist Hanoi on technical and political matters and war strategy. [redacted] the only way to settle the Vietnam conflict was by the complete destruction of US forces in Vietnam.

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The Chinese are convinced that the US plans to continue its escalation of the war. Peking is probably planning to increase the level of its logistics support for North Vietnam next year to encourage Hanoi to resist a negotiated settlement of the war.

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6 December 1966

V-1

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